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**For Immediate Release:** June 6, 2002

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***Kernan Announces Grant to Train 207 Workers  
at Pendleton's Tractor Supply Co. Distribution Center***

INDIANAPOLIS — Lt. Governor Joe Kernan announced today that Pendleton's Tractor Supply Co. Distribution Center has been awarded \$37,250 from the Indiana Department of Commerce's Skills Enhancement Fund.

Tractor Supply Co. is the nation's largest farm and ranch equipment retail chain, supplying a variety of products for farmers and ranchers, hobby farmers, rural homeowners, suburban customers and contractors. The Madison County location services 317 stores in the Midwest and East.

The company, which received an \$75,000 training grant when it opened the Pendleton facility in 1999, will use the new grant to train 157 existing employees and 50 new employees following a \$3.6 million investment in equipment and building upgrades. Employees will learn forklift operation, computer skills and enterprise resource planning as a result of the funding.

"Tractor Supply Co. is investing in its workforce at the same time it's investing in new technology, and that's a winning combination," said Kernan, who leads the state's economic development efforts. "Strong employee skills are key to the success of any business, and we're proud to support this company's training efforts."

Founded in 1938 as a mail order business in Chicago, Tractor Supply Co. has grown to be the largest operator, of retail farm stores in America. Today, the company continues to grow, operating over 400 stores in 30 states. The Pendleton Distribution Center is the largest facility in the company's distribution network.

"Tractor Supply Co. is proud to partner with the State of Indiana again to provide training opportunities for our Pendleton Distribution team members. Not only will our team members gain basic skills such as forklift operation but also technical and computer skills that are highly valued in today's workforce," said Barbara Janowski, human resources manager at Tractor Supply Co. "As a company, we are investing in our Pendleton facility to support our retail store growth. This year we will open 112 new stores, primarily in the Midwest and East Coast markets. Our team members are key to our success, and the SEF grant will allow us to provide them with the skills to be successful."

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Commerce awards Skills Enhancement Fund grants to Indiana companies that undertake capital investment projects. The grants help defray the costs of training new and current employees in basic work skills and company-specific skills necessary to support the project. Companies interested in learning more about the Skills Enhancement Fund or other Commerce programs should contact the Business Development Division at 800.463.8081, or visit the Web Site at [www.indianacommerce.com](http://www.indianacommerce.com).

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